

THE Exploits of Elaine

A Detective Novel and a Motion Picture Drama
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 Introducing Miss Pearl White,
 Arnold Daly and "Craig Kennedy"
 The Famous Scientific Detective of Fiction.

Written by Arthur B. Reeve

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Cast of Leading Characters in the Motion Picture Reproduction by the
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Synopsis of Previous Chapters.

The New York police are mystified by a series of murders and other crimes. The principle clue to the criminals is a warning letter which is sent the victims signed with a "clutching hand." The latest victim of the mysterious assassin is Taylor Dodge, a wealthy insurance president. His daughter, Elaine, employs Craig Kennedy, the famous scientific detective, to try to unravel the mystery. What Kennedy discovers is told by his friend, Jameson, a newspaper man. Enraged at the determined effort which Elaine and Craig Kennedy are making to put an end to his crimes, the Clutching Hand, as this strange criminal is known, resorts to all sorts of the most diabolical schemes to put them out of the way. Each chapter of the story tells of a new plot against their lives. It is only the great detective uses all his skill to save this pretty girl and himself from death.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Draught of Death

Pacing up and down his den in the heart of Chinatown, Long Sin was thinking over his bargain with Kennedy to betray the infamous Clutching Hand.

At length he seated himself at a teak-wood table, still deliberating over the promise he had been forced to make to Kennedy. The sat for some moments, deeply absorbed in thought.

Suddenly an idea seemed to strike him. Lifting a little hammer, he struck a Chinese gong on the table at his side. At the same time he leaned over and turned a knob at the side of a large rolltop desk.

A few seconds later a sort of hatchway, covered by a rug on the floor, in one corner of the room, was slowly lifted, and Long Sin's secretary, a pale, cadaverous Chinaman, appeared from below. He stepped noiselessly into the room and shuffled across to Long Sin.

Long Sin scowled, as though something had interfered with his own plans, but tore open the envelope without a word, spreading out on his lap the sheet of paper it contained.

The letter bore a typewritten message, all in capitals, which read:

"BE AT HEADQUARTERS AT 12. DESTROY THIS IMMEDIATELY."

At the bottom of the note appeared the sinister signature of the Clutching Hand. As soon as he had finished reading the obnoxious secretary, who stood motionless, with folded arms and head meekly bent.

"Very well," he said, with an imperious wave of his hand. "You may go."

Bowing low again the secretary shuffled across and down again through the hatchway, closing the door as he descended.

Long Sin read the note once more, while his insensible face assumed an expression of malicious cunning. Then he glanced at his heavy gold watch.

A few moments later, with a malignant chuckle, Long Sin rose slowly and left the room.

Meanwhile the master criminal was busily engaged in putting the finishing touches to a final scheme of fiendish ingenuity for the absolute destruction of Craig Kennedy.

He had been at work in a small room, fitted up as a sort of laboratory, in the mysterious house which now served as his headquarters.

Clutching Hand, at a bench in one corner, had just completed an infernal machine of diabolical cunning, and was wrapping it carefully in paper to make an innocent package and a dead man.

He was interrupted by a knock at the door. Laying down the bomb he went to answer the summons with a stealthy movement. There stood Long Sin, who had disguised himself as a Chinese laundryman.

"On time—good!" growled Clutching Hand hurriedly as he closed the door with equal care.

No time was wasted in useless formalities.

"This is a bomb," he went on, pointing to the package. "Carry it carefully. On no account let it slip, or you are a dead man. It must be in Kennedy's laboratory before night. Understand? Can you arrange it?"

Long Sin glanced at the dangerous package, then with an impulsive look, replied: "Have no fear. I can do it. I will be in the laboratory within an hour. Trust me."

For a moment Clutching Hand gave himself up to exquisite contemplation of what he had just done, then turned to clear up his workshop.

In Kennedy's laboratory I was watching Craig make some experiments with a new X-ray apparatus which had just arrived, occasionally looking through the microscope when he was examining some unusually interesting object.

We were oblivious to the passage of time, and only a call over our speaking tube diverted our attention.

I opened the door and a few seconds later Long Sin himself entered.

Kennedy looked up inquiringly as the Chinaman approached, holding out a package which he carried.

"A bomb," he said, in the most matter-of-fact way. "I promised to have it placed in your laboratory before night."

The pleasant smile which the grotesque-looking Chinaman imparted this astounding information was in itself preposterous. His actions and words as he laid the package down gingerly on the laboratory table indicated that he was selling the truth.

Kennedy and I stared at each other in blank amazement for a moment. Then the humor of the thing struck us both and we laughed outright.

Clutching Hand had told him to deliver it—and he had done so!
Hastily I filled a pail with water and brought it to Kennedy.

"If it is really a bomb," I remarked, "why not put the thing out of commission?"

"No, no, Walter," he cried quickly, shaking his head. "If it's a chemical bomb, the water might be just the thing to make the chemicals run together and set it off."

He took the bomb and carefully placed it under the wonderful rays, then with the microscope over his eyes studied the shadow cast by the rays on its sensitive screen. For several minutes he continued safely studying it from every angle, until he thoroughly understood it.

"It's a bomb, sure enough," Craig exclaimed, looking up from it at last to me. "It's timed by an ingenious and noiseless little piece of clockwork, in there, too. And it's powerful enough to blow us all, the laboratory included, to kingdom come."

As he spoke, and before I could remonstrate with him, he took the infernal machine and placed it on a table, where he set to work on the most delicate and dangerous piece of dissection of which I have ever heard.

Carefully unwrapping the bomb, and unscrewing one part while he held another firm, he finally took out of it a bottle of liquid and some powder. Then he placed a few grains of the powder on a dish and dropped on it a drop or two of the liquid. There was a bright flash as the powder ignited instantly.

"Just what I expected," commented Kennedy with a nod, as he examined the clever workmanship of the bomb.

One thing that interested him was that part of the contents had been wrapped in paper to keep them in place. This paper he was now carefully examining with a microscope.

As nearly as I could make out, the paper contained part of a typewritten chemical formula, which read:

"Structure of iodine. Three parts of—"
"He looked up from his study of the microscope to Long Sin.

"Tell me just how it happened that you got this bomb," he asked.

Without hesitation the Chinaman recited the circumstances, beginning with the note by which he had been summoned.

"Was it typewritten?"

Long Sin reached into his pocket and produced the note itself, which he had not burned.

As Craig studied the typewritten message from the Clutching Hand I could see that he was growing more and more excited.

"At last he has given us something typewritten," he exclaimed. "To most people, I suppose, it means that typewriting is the best way to conceal identity. But there are a thousand and one ways of identifying typewriting. Clutching Hand knew that. That was why he was so careful to order this note destroyed. As for the bomb, he figured that it would destroy itself."

He was placing one piece of typewriting after another under the lens, scrutinizing each letter closely.

"Look, Walter," he remarked at length, taking a fine tipped pencil and pointing at the distinguishing marks as he talked. "You will notice that all the 'T's' in this note are battered and faint as well as a trifle out of alignment. Now I will place the paper from the bomb under the microscope and you will also see that the 'T's' in the scrap of formula have exactly the same appearance. That indicates without the possibility of a doubt, taken in connection with a score of other peculiarities in the letters which I could pick out, that both these were written on the same typewriter. I have selected the 'T's' because it is the most marked."

I strained my eyes to look. Sure enough, Kennedy was right. There was that unmistakable identity between the 'T's' in the formula and the note.

"Clutching Hand had been gazing at the floor, his face puckered in thought as I looked. Suddenly he clasped his hands together, as if he had made a great discovery.

"I've struck it!" he exclaimed, jumping up. "I was wondering where I had been typewriting that reminds me of this. Walter, set on your coat and hat. We are on the right trail at last."

Aunt Josephine was in the library, knitting, when the butler, Jennings, announced us. We were admitted at once, for Aunt Josephine had never quite understood what was the trouble between Elaine and Craig, and had a high regard for him.

"Where is Miss Dodge?" inquired Kennedy, with suppressed excitement, as we entered.

"I think she's out shopping, and I don't know just when she will be back," answered Aunt Josephine, with some surprise. "Why? Is it anything important—any news?"

"Very important," returned Kennedy, excitedly. "I think I have the best clue yet. Only—it will be necessary to look through some of the household correspondence immediately to see whether there are certain letters. I wouldn't be surprised if she had some—perhaps not very personal—but I must see them."

Aunt Josephine seemed perplexed at first. I thought she was going to refuse to allow Craig to proceed. But finally she assented.

"Kennedy lost no time. He went to a desk where Elaine generally sat, and quickly took out several typewritten letters. One after another he examined them closely, rejecting one after another, until finally he came to one that seemed to interest him.

He separated it from the rest and fell to studying it, comparing it with the pa-



Bennett, the Trusted Lawyer, Attempts to Kill Elaine When He Finds that She Knows He is the Master Criminal.

per from the bomb and the note which Long Sin had received from the Clutching Hand. Then he folded the letter so that both the signature and the address could not be read by us.

A portion of the letter I recall reading something like this:

"This is his contention: Whereas, true is the only goal and matter is non-existent—"

"Look at this, Walter," remarked Craig, with difficulty restraining himself. "What do you make of it?"

A glance at the typewriting was sufficient to show me that Kennedy had indeed made an important discovery. The writing of the letter which he had just found in Elaine's desk corresponded in every respect with that in the Clutching Hand note and that on the bomb formula.

In each instance there were the same faintness, the same crooked alignment, the same battered appearance of all the letter 'T's.

We stared at each other, almost too dazed to speak.

At that moment we were startled by the sudden appearance of Elaine herself, who had come in unexpectedly from her shopping expedition.

She entered the room, carrying in her arms a huge bunch of roses, which she had evidently just received. Her face was half buried in the fragrant blossoms, but was fairer than even they in their selected elegance.

The moment she saw Craig, however, she stopped short with a look of great surprise. Kennedy, on his part, who was seated at the desk, still tracing out the similarities of the letters, stood up, half hesitating what to say. He bowed, and she returned his salutation with a very cool nod.

"I beg pardon, Miss Dodge," he said, "but a matter has just come up which necessitated merely a cursory examination of some purely formal letters which might have an important bearing on the discovery of the Clutching Hand. Your aunt had no idea where you were, nor when you might return, and the absolute necessity for haste in such an important matter is my only excuse for examining a few minor letters without first obtaining your permission."

She said nothing. At another time such an explanation would have been instantly accepted. "Now, however, it was different.

Kennedy read the look on her face and an instant later turned to Aunt Josephine and myself.

"I would very much appreciate a chance to say a few words to Miss Dodge alone," he intimated. "I have had no such opportunity for some time. If you would be so kind as to leave us in the library—for a few minutes—"

He did not finish the sentence. Aunt Josephine had already begun to withdraw and I followed.

For a moment or two Craig and Elaine looked at each other, neither saying a word, each wondering just what was in the other's mind. Kennedy was wondering if there was any X-ray that might read a woman's heart, as he was accustomed to read others of nature's secrets.

He cleared his throat, the obvious manner of covering up his emotion.

"Elaine," he said at length, dropping the recent return to "Miss Dodge," for the moment, "Elaine, is there any truth in this morning's newspaper report of—of you?"

She had dropped her eyes. But he persisted, taking a newspaper clipping from his pocket and handing it to her.

Her hand trembled as she glanced over the item:

SOCIETY NOTES.
Dame Rumor is connecting the name of Miss Elaine Dodge, the heiress, with that of Perry Bennett, the famous young lawyer. The announcement of an engagement between them at any time would not surprise.

Elaine read no further. She handed back the clipping to Kennedy. As her eyes met his she noticed his expression of deep concern, and hesitated with the reply she had evidently been just about to make.

Still, as she lowered her head it seemed to give silent confirmation to the truth of the newspaper report.

Kennedy said nothing, but his eyes continued to study her face.

He suppressed his feelings with a great effort, then, without a word, bowed and left the room.

"Walter!" he exclaimed as he rejoined us in the drawing room, where I was chatting with Aunt Josephine. "We must be off again. The trail follows still further."

I rose and, much to the increased mystification of Aunt Josephine, we left the house.

An hour or so later, Elaine, whose mind was now in a whirl from what had happened, decided to make a call on her lawyer and the confidant of her father, Perry Bennett.

Two or three clerks were in the outer office when she arrived, but the office boy, laying down a dime novel, rose to meet her and informed her that Mr. Bennett was alone.

He was the Clutching Hand!
In spite of the closed doors we could now plainly hear Elaine's shrieks. Craig, the secretary and myself made a rush for the door to Bennett's private office. Finding it locked, we began to batter it.

By this time, however, Bennett had hurled himself upon Elaine and was slowly choking her.

Kennedy quickly found that it was impossible to batter down the door in time by ordinary means. Quickly he seized the typewriter and hurled it through the panels. Then he thrust his hand through the opening and turned the catch.

As we flung ourselves into the room Bennett rushed into a closet in a corner, slamming the door behind him. It was composed of sheet iron and effectually prevented anyone from breaking through. Kennedy and I tried vainly, however, to pry it open.

While we were thus endeavoring to force an entrance Bennett, in a sort of closet, had put on the coat, hat and mask which he invariably wore in the character of the Clutching Hand. Then he cautiously opened a secret door in the back of the closet and slowly made an exit.

Shouting a few directions to the secretary, the clerks and Elaine, Kennedy climbed through the window and darted down the fire escape in swift pursuit.

The Clutching Hand, however, managed to elude capture again. Turning the street corner he leaped into a taxi which happened to be standing there, and, hastily giving the driver directions, was driven rapidly away. By the time Kennedy reached the street Clutching Hand had disappeared.

While these exciting events were occurring in Bennett's office some queer doings were in progress in the heart of Chinatown.

Deep underground, in one of the catacombs known only to the innermost members of the Chinese secret societies, was Tong Wah, popularly known as "the hider," engaged in some mysterious work.

A sinister looking Chinaman, dressed in a coolie costume, he was standing at a table in a dim and musty, high-ceilinged chamber, faced with stone and brick. Before him were eight odd-shaped Chinese vials, and from these he was carefully measuring certain proportions, as if concocting some powerful potion.

He stepped back and looked around suspiciously as he suddenly heard footsteps above. The next moment Long Sin, who had entered through a trap door, climbed down a long ladder and walked into the room.

Long Sin took the bowl in which the liquor had been mixed, and, having examined it, he gave a nod and grunt of satisfaction. Then he mounted the ladder again and disappeared.

As soon as he had gone, Tong Wah, picking up several of the vials, went out through an iron door at the end of the room.

A few minutes later the Clutching Hand drove up to Long Sin's house in the taxicab, and, after paying the chauffeur, went to the door and knocked sharply.

In response to his knocking Long Sin appeared on the threshold and motioned to Bennett to come in, evidently astonished to see him.

As he entered, Bennett made a secret sign and said: "I am the Clutching Hand. Kennedy is close on my trail, and I have come to be hidden."

In a tone which betrayed alarm and fear, the Chinaman intimated that he had no place in which Bennett could be concealed with any degree of safety.

For a moment Bennett stared savagely at Long Sin.

"I possess hidden plunder worth seven million dollars," he pleaded quickly, "and if by your aid I can make a getaway, a seventh is yours."

The Chinaman's duplicity was clearly

excited by Bennett's offer, while the bare mention of the amount at stake was sufficient to overcome all his scruples.

After exchanging a few words he finally agreed to aid the Clutching Hand. Opening a trap door in the floor of the room in which they were standing, he led Bennett down a step-ladder into the subterranean chamber in which Tong Wah had so recently been preparing his mysterious potion.

As Bennett sank into a chair and passed his hands over his brow in utter weariness, Long Sin poured into a cup some of the liquor of death which Tong Wah had mixed. He handed it to Bennett, who drank it eagerly.

"How do you propose to help me to escape?" asked Bennett hoarsely.

"Without a word Long Sin went to the wall, and, grasping one of the stones, pressed it back, opening a large receptacle, in which there were two glass cups, apparently containing two dead Chinamen. Pulling out the coffins, he pushed them before Bennett, who rose to his feet and gazed upon them with wonder.

Long Sin broke the silence: "These men," he said, "are not dead; but they have been in this condition for many months. It is what is called in your language suspended animation."

"Is that what you intend to do with me?" asked Bennett, shrinking back in terror.

The Chinaman nodded in affirmation as he pushed back the coffins.

Overcome by the horror of the idea Bennett, with a groan, sank back into the chair, shaking his head as if to indicate that the plan was far too terrible to carry out.

With a sinister smile and a shrug of his shoulders Long Sin pointed to the cup from which Bennett had drunk.

"But, dear master," he remarked suavely, "you have already drunk a full dose of the potion which causes insensibility, and it is overcoming you. Even now," he added, "you are too weak to rise."

Bennett made frantic efforts to move from his seat, but the potion was already taking effect, and through sheer weakness he found he was unable to get on his feet in spite of all his struggles.

With a malicious chuckle Long Sin moved closer to his victim and spoke again.

"Divulge where your \$7,000,000 are hidden," he suggested craftily, "and I will give you an antidote."

By this time Bennett, who was becoming more rigid each moment, was unable to speak, but by a movement of his head and an expression in his eyes he indicated that he was ready to agree to the Chinaman's proposal.

"Where have you hidden the \$7,000,000?" repeated Long Sin.

Slowly, and after a desperate struggle, Bennett managed to raise one hand and pointed to his breast pocket. The Chinaman instantly thrust in his hand and drew out a map.

For some moments Long Sin examined the map intently, and, with a grin of satisfaction, he placed it in his own pocket. Then he mixed what he declared was a sure antidote, and, pouring some of the liquor into a cup, he held it to Bennett's lips.

As Bennett opened his mouth to drink it, Long Sin with a laugh slowly pulled the cup away and poured its contents on the floor.

Bennett's body had now become still more rigid. Every sign of intelligence had left his face, and although his eyes did not close, a blank stare came over his countenance, indicating plainly that the drug had destroyed all consciousness.

By this time I was slowly recovering my senses in the secretary's office, where Bennett had left me. Elaine, the secre-

tary and the clerks were gathered around me, doing all they could to revive me. Meanwhile Kennedy had enlisted the aid of two detectives and was scouring the city for a trace of Bennett or the taxicab in which he had fled.

Somehow, Kennedy suspected instinctively that Long Sin might give a clue to Bennett's whereabouts, and a few moments later we were all on our way in a car to Long Sin's house.

Though we did not know it, Long Sin, at the moment when Kennedy knocked at his door, was feeling in his inside pocket to see that the map he had taken from Bennett was perfectly safe. Finding that he had it, he smiled with his peculiar oriental guile. Then he opened the door and stood for a moment silent.

"Where is Bennett?" demanded Kennedy.

Long Sin eyed us all, then, with a placid smile, said, "Follow me. I will show you."

He opened a trap door and we climbed down after Craig, entering a subterranean chamber, led by Long Sin.

There was Bennett, seated rigidly in the chair beside the table, from which the vials and cups, about which we knew nothing, had been removed.

"How did it happen?" asked Kennedy.

"He came here," replied Long Sin, with a wave of his hand, "and before I could stop him he did away with himself."

In dumb shock the Chinaman indicated that Bennett had taken poison.

"Well, we've got him," mused Kennedy, shaking his head sadly, adding after a pause, "but he is dead."

Elaine, who had followed us down, covered her eyes with her hands and was sobbing convulsively. I thought she would faint, but Kennedy led her gently away into an upper room.

As he placed her in an easy chair, he bent over her wearily.

"Did you—did you—really—love him?" he asked in a low tone, nodding in the direction from which he had led her.

Still shuddering, and with an eager look at Kennedy, Elaine shook her beautiful head.

Then, slowly rising to her feet, she looked at Craig appealingly. For a moment he looked down into her two great lakes of eyes.

"Forgive me," murmured Elaine, holding out her hand. Then she added in a voice tense with emotion, "Thank you for saving me."

Kennedy took her hand. For a moment he held it. Then he drew her toward him, unrestraining.

(To Be Continued.)

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None of 'em are in it at fun-making with the Katzenjammers, Happy Hooligan and little Snookums.

EXPLOITS of ELAINE

..with..

THE CLUTCHING HAND

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